

Yanks Phone an Offer to Mantle But He Says, 'Wrong Numbers'

By JOHN DREBINGER

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ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., Feb. 27—Yankee training will start in earnest Wednesday when the infielders and outfielders hold their first workout here. Up to now only the battery men have been taking their preliminary exercises.

Today Manager Casey Stengel learned indirectly that his top performer—Mickey Mantle—probably would be missing.

Mantle's likely absence was revealed by George Weiss, the Yankee general manager, in an open discussion of the Yankee "holdout" situation.

First there was the news that Bobby Richardson, the crack young second baseman, had come to terms, leaving eight Yankees still unsigned.

On top of that Ryne Duren, the relief ace, had arrived during the night and today received



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Mickey Mantle

a medical approval from the club physician, Dr. Sidney Gaynor,

Continued on Page 2, Column 5

MANTLE REJECTS A PHONED OFFER

Continued From Page 1

on his fractured wrist.

Duren then went into a salary conference with Roy Hamey, the assistant general manager, and while there still was no signing, it was felt the two were not far apart.

"In fact," said Weiss, "I think I can safely say that, with a single exception, all the players still unsigned will be in uniform next Wednesday. I don't think I need name the one exception."

The inference was broad enough. It could only be Mantle, and Weiss didn't mind at all discussing how matters stood with the renowned switcher, whose reported \$75,000 salary of 1959 is understood to have received a \$13,000 slash.

"I talked with Mantle in Dallas over the telephone," said Weiss, "and invited him to come here to talk things over. He said he thought we could do that over the phone."

"I pointed out to him that in the past all our contract negotiations had always been conducted in man-to-man fashion over a table. I told him I did not think that a matter of such importance and involving a lot of money should be discussed over the telephone."

"Then, when he still insisted he would not come here unless we made him a definite proposition I told him Hamey would give him that proposition, but I would not discuss it any further."

"Well, Hamey phoned him that definite proposition. Mantle turned it down and that's the way the situation stands at this moment. I can only say that I will not discuss it any further with him over the phone."

Increase for Richardson

Richardson, who in his first full season as the Yankee second baseman led the team at bat with a .301 average, is understood to have signed for \$16,000, an increase of \$4,000 over his 1959 salary.

Bobby, though not required to start his workouts until next Wednesday, lost no time skipping out to Miller Huggins Field and getting into uniform.

Duren, who received \$15,000 last year following a spectacular relief season in 1958, is waging a slightly different battle.

He had been asked to take a slight cut because he did tail off perceptibly in the second half last summer. Also, there was a matter of the wrist he fractured on the next to last day of the season.

However, now that he has passed medical inspection by Dr. Gaynor, it is quite likely he'll get as much as last year and perhaps a little more. For the bespectacled fire-baller, despite a predilection for throwing damaging home run balls, nevertheless did compile an impressive record last season. He had a 1.87 earned-run average for seventy-seven games.

In addition to Duren and Mantle, the other unsigned players are Andy Carey, Tony Kubek and Kent Hadley, infielders, the latter a rookie acquired in the Kansas City deal, and Roger Maris, Hector Lopez and the rookie Ken Hunt, outfielders.

Sad News for Yanks

The Yankees were saddened by the death of 89-year-old Al Lang, who spent more than fifty years making Florida the mecca of major league spring training.

As a mark of respect the Yankees canceled their training session next Tuesday afternoon, when Lang's funeral will be held here.

Weiss spoke warmly of the man who had induced the Yankees to train here in 1925. With the exception of the mandatory interruptions caused during the war years, the Yanks have trained in St. Pete ever since.

"Baseball lost a great friend

with the passing of Al Lang," said Weiss. "He made Florida the baseball capital of the world each spring and his memory will live long after many of the stars brought here are forgotten."

"We of the Yankees knew Al for almost four decades and we are in his debt for having brought us to St. Petersburg and for all he did for us right up to the time of his death."

To this Stengel added: "I don't think there was ever a minute in the last fifty years that Al wasn't busy working on making Florida the No. 1 state for spring training."

For years, major league clubs had trained all over the South and Southwest, with camps in Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and California. Today all except four, who train in Arizona, go to Florida.